



CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

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February 23, 1998

Mike Wackman, President
Sacramento County Farm Bureau
8970 Elk Grove Blvd.
Elk Grove, CA 95624-1946

Dear Mr. Wackman:

This is in response to your letter of January 21, 1998, expressing three concerns about the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. You have expressed concerns about the effects of turning large amounts of farmland into wetlands or wildlife habitat, about an over-commitment of water supplies, and about transfers of water from agriculture to urban users.

We agree with your observation that the Delta has some of the richest farmland in the world and that it would be unwise to destroy such an important resource. The potential for conversion of Delta farmland comes from many directions, including flooding and urbanization. The CALFED Program is considering proposals to address the flood threat. In our *Delta Long-Term Levee System Protection Plan*, we set out several proposals for actions to strengthen Delta levees. Some of these actions call for setting some Delta levees back from their current alignment. These set-back levees would protect farmland by strengthening levees, and the expanded waterside areas could provide additional wildlife habitat. We are working to find a set of proposals that balances increased safety from improved levees with removal of land from production. Our current proposals envision much less than 150,000 acres of Delta farmland being converted from agricultural uses.

You have also expressed concern about the imbalance between water supplies and water demand. The CALFED Bay-Delta Program is addressing water supply reliability, and we are working to develop plans that would reduce the mismatch between supplies and demand. Reducing this mismatch requires actions to reduce demand, of course, but it also requires actions to augment supplies. Beginning from the early stages of program development, CALFED staff have consistently reviewed a range of storage enhancements. For purposes of analysis, this range has varied from zero to 6.0 million acre-feet. In mid-December 1997, CALFED staff presented three alternative plans to the Bay-Delta Advisory Council. These alternatives were designed to achieve the best performance from each of the three basic physical approaches to addressing

CALFED Agencies

California The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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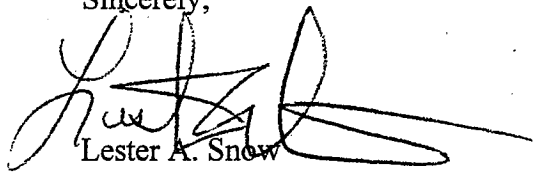
Bay-Delta system issues. Each alternative contains the full range of storage up to 6 million acre-feet of additional capacity. The CALFED staff recognizes the potential for a broad range of benefits -- including water supply benefits -- from properly designed and constructed storage. CALFED staff also is aware of the negative and costly impacts of ill-advised storage. We will continue to evaluate viable storage sites throughout the summer.

Finally, you have expressed concern about water transfers from agriculture to urban users. You express the opinion that some transfers can benefit both agriculture and urban users, but that transfers should be limited because transfers will have negative impacts on local communities. I agree that transfers can have benefits and that transfers could potentially have negative impacts. In addressing water supply reliability, we are examining the conditions surrounding water transfers to ensure that our proposals would result in effective and protective water transfer arrangements that would provide the benefits that we both see.

We remain confident that CALFED agencies will develop a balanced, long-term solution to the problems of ecosystem quality, water quality, water supply reliability, and levee system vulnerability affecting the Bay-Delta system. We also remain confident that implementation of this balanced, long-term solution will result in benefits for all of California.

I hope this information is helpful. Please call me at (916) 657-2666 if you wish to discuss this matter in more detail.

Sincerely,



Lester A. Snow
Executive Director

cc Governor Pete Wilson
Congressman Richard Pombo
Senator Pat Johnston
Assemblyman Larry Bowler
Supervisor Don Nottoli